

Minutes
Skateboard Park Advisory Committee
April 18, 2005

Committee Members Present: Diane Cortese, Matthew Johnston, Mike Shaughnessy, Dan Hughes, Gareth Roe, Micah Shapiro, John Carr, Scott Shinn

Guests: Manuel Cawaling, Kate Martin, Roxanne Thomas, Marshall Reed, Dan, Joe Mormon

Staff: Susan Golub

Committee Business: Minutes from the March 21st meeting were approved. It was decided that the minutes would be distributed to Committee members by e-mail after each meeting and that members would have seven days in which to send comments and corrections to Susan. After seven days, Susan will e-mail a final version to the Committee.

The agenda was approved, with an addition: a presentation by Manuel Cawaling on the Langston Hughes skateboard/art project.

Public Comments:

1. Diane Cortese: Diane read an e-mail from Jennifer Stephens, SPAC member unable to attend the meeting, regarding site selection for the skatepark at Lower Woodland. The e-mail opposed the chip site and supported the SPAC process for site selection.

2. Marshall Reed: He works with and represents street skaters. He has tried to get young people interested in SPAC, but so far has been unable to get any to come to the meetings.

3. Joe Mormon: SPAC needs to be sure to represent street skaters. We need to build what skaters want.

4. Roxanne Thomas: She is a West Seattle resident who wants to see a skatepark built in the South end. She is an in-line skater (and parent of a skateboarder) who would like to see more inclusion of in-line skating.

5. Kate Martin: Kate read an e-mail she sent to the City Council regarding site selection at Lower Woodland. She is opposed to the vote taken by the board of Park Commissioners supporting the original Lower Woodland site and supports the SPAC process for site selection.

Langston Hughes Summer Skateboard/Art Project

Manuel Cawaling, the Managing Director of the Langston Hughes Cultural Center (a City Parks facility), described a new program they are initiating this summer. They are trying to involve more young people in their summer program (the Langston Hughes summer musical involves approximately 65 youth). In association with the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), Langston Hughes is funding a new 10 week

program combining skateboarding, break dancing, poetry and theater. The program will include classes teaching job training skills such as resume writing.

The skateboarding component will involve building ramps and locating them in the Langston Hughes back parking lot. The youth will write a performance piece which will be performed in the theater at the end of the summer. The program is looking for 15 youth who must meet the SYEP criteria which include attributes that might make it difficult to find a job: low income, learning disabled, or in trouble with the law.

Langston Hughes would like support from the SPAC, including:

- Donations of skateboards;
- Help coming up with a name for the project;
- Referrals of youth; and
- Help connecting with businesses which could support the project.

SPAC member John Carr agreed to be the point person for SPAC on this project.

Seattle Center Skatepark Replacement

Matthew Johnston reported to the Committee about the April 15th meeting held at the Seattle Center. At the meeting Center staff person Jill Crary described the analysis the Center undertook regarding replacing the Center's skatepark on the Center campus. One area that shows promise for the future is the Fun Forest area. However, it is not a viable option now because of long term leases the Center holds with the Fun Forest ride providers. Monorail relocation will change this area, possibly opening up a good site for a skatepark. However, the relocation will not occur for several years.

Matt noted that the requirement in the Center/Gates Foundation agreement that the replacement park be under construction before the existing one is demolished is good, but also puts pressure on site selection. The requirement that the new park be in the same general area as the existing is good also because we want to serve the same community as the existing park, but this places additional pressure on finding a site.

Another area the Center evaluated is property east of the KCTS building, but this was not big enough for a 9,000 square foot skatepark. Also property to the south of Key Arena, currently in use as a parking lot, was assessed. The uncertainty about future expansion of Key Arena put this property in question. Using a portion of the Memorial Stadium lot for the skatepark was also discussed. This property is owned by the Seattle School District, not the City of Seattle, and earns significant revenue for the District. Comments were made that the skateboarding community does not want to be seen as taking revenue from a hurting school system, but that also the School District should do more to provide skateboard recreation for its students.

Scott Shinn raised the possibility of splitting the Gates/Center funding and using it to build separate skateparks, instead of one. Looking for a site that can accommodate a smaller park might open up more possibilities on the Center campus. Committee discussion on this issue concluded that it was better to use the funding to build a park

now and move to find a site at the Center in the future when the fun forest and monorail issues have been resolved.

The Committee expressed their disappointment that they have been offered only one viable replacement option: 545 Elliott. They recognized that other Parks Department properties in the same general area as the Seattle Center were not suitable: Upper Queen Anne is too far away, Freeway Park is “politically loaded on its own”, and that many sites in the area are steep hillsides on Queen Anne or have had recent development or planning projects (Cascade and South Lake Union Parks).

The Committee laid out three options to consider regarding the Elliott site:

- 1) Endorse Elliott as is;
- 2) Endorse Elliott with conditions; and
- 3) Endorse spreading the funding among multiple sites, and not at Elliott.

Discussion of these options included the concerns the Committee has about the Elliott site including noise, policing issues and pollution. The Committee voted in favor of option 2: Endorse Elliott with conditions. The main point of the conditions is to make the Elliott site as “livable” as the current Seattle Center location. John Carr is to draft the letter for the Committee. The discussion of what the conditions will be in the letter will be done via e-mail.

Lower Woodland Site Selection

Susan Golub described the action taken by the Board of Park Commissioners at their April 14th meeting. Susan noted that the Board was responding to a letter the Board received from Kate Martin. The Board passed a motion supporting the original Parks Department site at Lower Woodland. Susan stated that the e-mail letter read by Kate Martin at the beginning of the meeting incorrectly stated that Susan brought this issue to the Board. The Board raised the issue itself in response to an earlier letter from Ms. Martin. Susan reported that in discussing its motion, the Board noted that they take a City-wide park stewardship role and this perspective led them to favor locating the new skatepark at the active lower Woodland site rather than the passive, green Aurora triangle site.

The Committee discussed how best to proceed with their Lower Woodland site selection process in light of the Board of Park Commissioners action. It was decided that Matthew Johnston would attend the next Park Board meeting (April 28) and read a letter from SPAC describing their process and requesting time on a future Board agenda to present their findings. Diane Cortese is to draft the letter and John Carr offered to help edit.

Committee Outreach

Gareth Roe stated he would like to have a SPAC web link on the Parks Department official web site. SPAC could use this link to post minutes, agendas, SPAC membership and other relevant info. Susan Golub will look into this issue and report back to the Committee

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 9:00p.m.